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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 4 June 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

CONTENTS

Other funds and programmes

(b) United Nations Capital Development Fund (continued)

(a) United Nations Development Fund for Women

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

(b) UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (continued) (DP/1993/42)

1. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) said that an informal meeting could usefully be held in the days ahead to discuss the future and proposed priorities of the United Nations Capital Development Fund, which had acquired a great deal of valuable expertise and experience. While the report of the Fund (DP/1993/42) contained a wealth of useful information, it had not dealt in sufficient detail with the problems encountered in the areas of project execution and empowerment. It would be useful to have an exchange of experiences on the subject with a view to finding lasting solutions to problems. He hoped that the following report would contain more information on that subject.

2. On the question of resources, he believed that the Fund could make greater efforts to mobilize national resources for programmes. He was surprised to learn that the Fund had projects to a total of $200 million awaiting financing. Even in the most favourable scenario, such a volume of projects exceeded the financing capacity and the Fund should therefore allocate some projects to other financing agencies or seek co-financers. It was difficult to give advice when his country did not know how much it would be forced to cut in its budget for cooperation activities in 1994. Switzerland would nevertheless honour its multi-annual commitments to institutions, such as the World Bank and regional banks.

3. UNCDF depended on too small a group of donor countries and he wondered what was being done to increase the group; it was time for the Fund to review its current policy vis-à-vis the trust funds. Other organizations had taken initiatives, such as debt for nature swaps, debt for poverty alleviation and debt for rural development. The Fund could also find innovative ways of attracting financing instead of limiting its resources to general contributions. In addition, the Fund should collaborate with other financing institutions, such as the World Bank, which were all pursuing similar development objectives, by more fully exploiting the valuable experience it had acquired in development funding.

4. Mr. COGHLAN (Observer for Australia) said that Australia, which had itself maintained its level of funding to the United Nations Capital Development Fund, encouraged donors to maintain, or preferably to increase, their contributions. While the Fund was one of the smaller United Nations development agencies receiving core funding from Australia, he had confidence in its ability to focus on poverty alleviation, which was a priority area for the Australian aid programme. He noted that over 50 per cent of the new project approvals specifically targeted women as beneficiaries and he commended the Fund on its work in promoting women in development.

5. Australia would welcome discussion on policy development and on the two interrelated themes of the comparative advantages of the Fund as a sponsor of innovative approaches and the compelling reasons for operating within area-based development programmes.

(Mr. Coghlan, Observer, Australia)

6. His country had found that integrated rural development projects did not always achieve the success envisaged for them at the design stage. Its experience was probably shared by a number of recipients, donors and executing agencies. Nevertheless, rigorous evaluation of projects and programmes, together with the implementation of lessons learned, were essential for ensuring that mistakes were not perpetuated and that the best value was obtained for limited development assistance funds. The Fund should therefore continue to give priority attention to monitoring and evaluation activities.

7. Australia would welcome a visit of representatives of the Fund for discussions on Australia's aid programme and on the activities of the Fund in the Asia-Pacific region. Such discussions could also reveal scope for co-financing with the Fund from Australia's bilateral programmes.

8. Mr. BORJA DE MOZOTA (France) said that France had traditionally defended the structural identity and financial autonomy of UNCDF which had now become a source of concern as a result of the decrease in its resources. In that connection his delegation shared the concern expressed by the Netherlands delegation.

9. While there were difficulties in the execution of some of the projects, the overall effectiveness of the Fund's activities, their high visibility and low administrative costs were laudable achievements.

10. The Fund should aim in particular to provide assistance to new least developed countries or newly independent States and should increase efforts to help grass-roots communities boost their domestic savings. France would continue its direct cooperation with the Fund through organizations such as the French Development Fund, and it would increase its financial support in terms of voluntary contributions to the Fund and least developed countries.

11. Mr. MOKOTJO (Lesotho) said that the Fund continued to play an important and relevant role in the provision of grants and concessional credit to small-scale entrepreneurs, particularly in the least developed countries. Although the Fund's special role in the implementation of global poverty reduction strategies had been confirmed by major international conferences, the gap between available resources and the number of recipient countries was widening.

12. As a beneficiary of UNCDF assistance, Lesotho had continued to make regular modest contributions to the Fund within the limits of its own serious budget constraints. The devastating drought that had hit eastern and southern Africa necessitated increased assistance from the Fund. In that connection, donor countries were strongly urged to increase their contributions to the Fund. He welcomed the Fund's ongoing review of modalities for improving its delivery mechanism with a view to making assistance more timely and effective and shared the concern expressed in the report that the mechanisms for popular participation should be carefully elaborated.

13. The flexibility of the Fund's operations was one of its strongest comparative advantages. The Fund had also accumulated invaluable experience from working directly with grass-roots beneficiaries and local non-governmental organizations. His delegation hoped that the Fund's working relationships with those organizations would be further improved and strengthened, bearing in mind

(Mr. Mokotjo, Lesotho)

the important role that they were expected to play in making the implementation of Agenda 21 a real success.

14. Mr. GUO Xianzhi (China) said that, since the beginning of the 1990s, the least developed countries as a whole had witnessed further socio-economic deterioration and more countries had joined their ranks. Those countries were faced with the urgent task of alleviating poverty and stabilizing development. UNCDF had been specially established for least developed countries and had assumed an indispensable responsibility in helping them achieve their development goals.

15. In 1991, the Fund had spent $45.5 million in project expenditures, an increase of 11 per cent over 1990. In 1992, expected project expenditure would be between $50 million and $55 million, a historical high. He commended the Fund's efforts to promote productivity and to boost social services in least developed countries and its efforts to provide interest-free loans. Although the Second United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries had set a goal of increasing the Fund's project expenditures by 20 per cent, in 1992 contributions to the Fund had fallen by 9 per cent as compared to the figure for 1991. In 1993, a further 5 per cent decrease was expected. His delegation deeply regretted that decline in resources. While least developed countries were primarily responsible for their own development, the support and assistance of the international community was indispensable. He hoped that the Fund would be flexible in finding new ways of fund-raising and that developed countries would make more generous contributions thereto. China, for its part, had consistently contributed to the Fund and maintained close cooperation with it.

16. Mr. FRIPPIART (Director, United Nations Capital Development Fund) said that the Fund's dilemma was how to remain creative and maintain visibility while its resources stagnated. Several representatives had drawn attention to the need for the Fund to gather background data on the local communities and their environment before embarking upon its funding operations. UNCDF proposed to update its information on such communities in the course of implementation of projects in order to assess the impact of its operations more effectively. In that connection, the Fund was open to suggestions and aware of the need to exchange information and cooperate with institutions involved in the same type of operation.

17. The Fund was facing a gap in financing. The Professional staff which previously devoted all its time to identification would henceforth refocus some of its attention on enhancing the follow-up and evaluation of operations. The Fund was aware that both recipients and donors wanted more accurate information on project impact and it would set about providing such information. In order to maintain its credibility the best way for the Fund to be creative about financing was to use its resources efficiently.

18. So far as policies were concerned, the Fund was on the right track. It would henceforth focus its attention on methodology. Accordingly, the division that dealt with policy definition would be involved to a greater extent in enhancing the definition of methodology. The Fund must adopt a coherent approach to the common group of problems of the 53 countries with which it dealt. It was absolutely necessary to put the Fund's concept into operation. In that regard, the definition of participation must be better understood.

(Mr. Frippiart)

However, UNCDF was not an organization that defined the macroeconomic or macropolitical policies and strategies of the countries which it assisted nor was it equipped to do so. It should however remain abreast of what was happening so that whenever it intervened it would have adequate information on what it was doing in order to know the implications of the activities which it was about to carry out. That would enable the central authorities and other donors to benefit from such activities. It would therefore endeavour to combine a sound methodological approach in its operations with a sound knowledge of the political context in which it operated.

19. The Fund's financial reserves, to date, were not commensurate with the assistance needs of recipient countries. In 1993 alone, UNCDF had received requests for $210 million. Given the limited resources available, it had been necessary for the Fund to adopt a cautious approach to the granting of requests; as a result many worthy programmes had not received funding. In addition, the Fund was raising its available resources by participating in collaborative projects with other multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, grass-roots organizations and bilateral development-financing institutions. He was gratified that there was once again interest among international development-financing institutions in many of the countries served by UNCDF as a result of recent trends towards decentralization and democratization; that interest augured well for collaborative projects in the future.

20. While the Fund could be an effective partner in managing development projects at the local level, it should avoid involvements in national development projects which were normally the domain of the multilateral development organizations. The task of UNCDF was to concentrate on those sectors of society that were often overlooked by international development-financing institutions and national Governments alike, namely, small communities and individuals. The goal of the Fund was to perform the role of community treasury. In the absence of effective management by national Governments, many small communities lacked the local resources to execute their own development projects. Very often resources were simply passed along to the central Government. People living in small communities did not lack the desire to participate in development projects; the question was more one of managerial competence. Decentralization of management authority, therefore, involved certain trade-offs: losses in competence frequently cancelled out technical gains in efficiency. Therefore, the Fund continued to rely on technical assistance. A more effective approach would be to concentrate on a few key areas of activity that would enable the Fund to build upon past experience.

21. With respect to strategies for broadening the Fund's donor base, the Fund should explore new financing approaches, such as co-financing and parallel financing in cooperation with donor countries. In the current period of financial constraints, many donor countries were looking for similar financing alternatives for their own projects; therefore, there were opportunities available in that regard.

22. In response to the comments of some members on the need to take into account the maintenance costs of the Fund's economic infrastructure projects, he said that the inclusion of maintenance costs would be a priority concern of the technical advisers' group that had been established under the Technical Support

(Mr. Frippiart)

Facility (TSF). It was essential for the Fund to maintain a high degree of rigor in its financial controls.

23. In response to a comment from one member regarding the erosion of the Fund's financial autonomy as a result of the transfer of its financial unit to a consolidated body serving a variety of UNDP funds, he said that UNCDF recognized that a compromise must be achieved among the overall interest of UNDP, the interest of the Organization in general, and the concerns of the Governing Council to rationalize its procedures in order to reduce costs. The step of combining the financial unit of UNCDF with the units of other UNDP funds was the consequence of such a compromise. He understood the concerns of the Administrator regarding costs; however, UNCDF had lost some of its autonomy as a result of the change. While the need for the reforms in question was not in doubt, there was nevertheless a point beyond which further reform could prove to be counterproductive. As the adage said "The 'best' must not be the enemy of the 'good'". He welcomed the comments by a number of States regarding the question of the financial autonomy of UNCDF.

24. The PRESIDENT said he would take it that the Committee wished to have a draft decision prepared reflecting views expressed in the general debate.

25. It was so decided.

(a) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN (DP/1993/41)

26. Mrs. CAPELING-ALAKIJA (Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women) said that there was a large gap between public awareness of massive violations of women's rights and the accountability of public institutions to take measures to prevent such acts. The genuine accomplishments of UNIFEM, namely, empowerment of women, promotion of their human rights, and promotion of the role of women in development were being overshadowed by an almost continuous series of instances of gender-based violence and large-scale violations of women's rights.

27. For women in the crossfire of armed conflict or in slums, squatter settlements or refugee camps, survival was more tenuous than ever. Despite a deeper understanding of the actual and potential contribution of women to the development process and a shared commitment to sustainable development, women in the developing world to date did not command access to political institutions or to resources commensurate with their proven abilities. Moreover, continuing reluctance to recognize and to meet the needs of women was calling into question the viability of the development effort itself.

28. Sustainable development would depend on the efforts of both women and men. The optimism with which the decade of the 1990s had been ushered in had given way to the realization that the long hoped for benefits of the end of the cold war, namely the "peace dividend" and economic progress, could turn out to be illusory.

29. Resources and programmes for the poor continued to decline while terrorism, environmental degradation and socially and economically destructive migration were increasing. In that context, the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) assumed even more importance. The Fund had

(Mrs. Capeling-Alakija)

been implementing strategic initiatives in a number of areas that reflected its growing responsibilities, including refugee assistance programmes for southern Africa; regional projects in seed production, livestock breeding, environmental management; and food research for drought-stricken areas of that continent. Those programmes also inspired the creation of a specialized programme for women in Africa which provided a quick emergency response to the critical situation affecting the women of that continent.

30. Notwithstanding the important role of UNIFEM in responding to emergency situations affecting women, long-term solutions to the problems of women depended upon greater participation by women in policy-making. The involvement of UNIFEM in preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) demonstrated that the organization had a comparative advantage in being able to link women at the grass-roots level with policy-making processes. Moreover, the Fund's participation in UNCED had also inspired a proposal to assign an adviser on gender issues from UNIFEM to the Department of Humanitarian Assistance.

31. The Fund had also assisted the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in ensuring that women would be registered for the historic elections of May 1993. Participants in a meeting sponsored by UNIFEM had organized themselves into a Cambodian national women's organization that advocated equal rights for women, development and peace.

32. In Latin America, UNIFEM had been working with a local non-governmental organization (NGO) to establish a bridge-financing facility for women's micro-enterprises throughout the region. As a result of that programme, local banks had begun to extend credit through groups affiliated with that NGO to businesses which otherwise would not receive financing. Experience gained from that programme provided the Fund with a model for the use of financial instruments to support poverty alleviation through micro-enterprise development.

33. UNIFEM was proud of the support it had received from Member States over the past two years. That support had made it possible for the Fund to deliver approximately $15 million in aid in 1992. Improved management procedures would make it possible for UNIFEM to deliver slightly more than its income in the future. However, despite its successes, UNIFEM remained a small institution; increased demand for its services was placing a great strain on its limited resources. She hoped that an alternative mechanism of external financing, supplemented by new contributions from donors, would generate enough resources to enable the Fund to participate in the Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing in 1995.

34. In conclusion, she said that the questions of greatest concern to women, such as fundamental political and civil rights, were not isolated from other issues of concern to the international community. The world needed to break the silence that had historically surrounded the issue of violence to women; only in that way could mass raping as in Bosnia and Herzegovina be averted in the future. One of the purposes of UNIFEM was to serve as a symbol of the solidarity of women throughout the world in opposing that kind of violence.

35. Mrs. VASISHT (India) said that the UNIFEM Director's appeal had struck a chord with her because, despite legal guarantees for the protection of women's rights, the attitudinal change necessary for real improvement in women's lives had been difficult to achieve. She considered UNIFEM's information dissemination and advocacy roles to be its most important responsibilities. UNIFEM was not struggling for absolute equality between the genders; rather, it was seeking to establish humane treatment of women as an international norm. She appealed to all countries to support UNIFEM by approving a level of funding for the current programming cycle that would be equivalent to past budgets.

36. Mr. FONDI (Italy) said that his country thought very highly of UNIFEM's work and had made substantial voluntary contributions to the Fund in the past. With respect to plans for decentralizing management of the Fund in accordance with resolution 47/199 on the operational activities of the Organization, Italy would support a phased-in approach. Lastly, he welcomed the comments of the Director regarding the Fund's participation in the International Conference on Human Rights (ICHR) and the Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing in 1995.

37. Ms. VOLKOFF (Canada) said that her country supported UNIFEM's activities and was pleased that it had taken such an active role in preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. Canada also supported the Fund's efforts to work in collaboration with other specialized agencies, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Department of Humanitarian Assistance in the execution of joint projects. She agreed with the Swiss delegation that UNIFEM had been a good "team player".

38. Her delegation had expressed concern in the past regarding the information-disseminating role of UNIFEM, and for that reason she welcomed the Fund's recent efforts to raise its profile as an advocate for the role of women in development. She supported the selection of Julie Andrews to be Goodwill Ambassador for UNIFEM and shared the comments of the representative of India regarding UNIFEM's advocacy role. UNIFEM was fighting against marginalization of the majority of the world's people. She looked forward to working with UNIFEM in preparation for the World Conference for Women in 1995.

39. Mr. KOBAYASHI (Japan) said that his Government attached great importance to the advancement of women, which was a key factor in economic and social development. Japan's contributions to UNIFEM had increased at a greater rate than its contributions to other United Nations funds and programmes. He hoped that the Fund would continue to play an important role in that field and strengthen its activities relating to the 1995 Fourth World Conference for Women.

40. UNIFEM should identify its comparative advantage in promoting the advancement of women, strengthen its catalytic role and maximize project impact. It could also play an advocacy role by enhancing public awareness in that regard. UNIFEM should improve its coordination with other bodies involved, particularly United Nations agencies. A clear division of labour between UNICEF, UNDP and other agencies in the field was indispensable. Lastly, the Fund should provide precise and comprehensive information on projects, including project evaluation and follow-up.

41. Mr. TALADRID-SUAREZ (Cuba) said that his Government sought to bring about the full emancipation and participation of Cuban women in all aspects of social, scientific, economic and political life. Cuba wished to continue to avail itself of the benefits of UNIFEM and urged the Fund to pursue its work to promote the full equality of women. His delegation completely supported the preparatory work for the Fourth World Conference for Women. Lastly, he stressed that women's rights were also human rights and underscored the indivisibility and interdependence of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in that regard.

42. Mr. GUO Xianzhu (China) said that his delegation fully appreciated the achievements of UNIFEM and noted with interest that the Fund was actively participating in the preparatory work for the Fourth World Conference for Women to be held in Beijing in 1995. He hoped that UNIFEM would fully utilize its experience in participating in international conferences and make a substantial contribution to the 1995 Conference.

43. Mr. POST (Netherlands) said that development aimed at promoting the advancement of women must take into account the total everyday reality in which they lived. His Government, therefore, had incorporated the theme of women and development in its development cooperation programme and was a strong supporter of UNIFEM. He welcomed the fact that UNIFEM was addressing such issues as the environment and women refugees and noted with satisfaction the work carried out by the Fund in the preparations for UNCED.

44. There was a need for more clearly defined priorities in the Fund's activities. The report under consideration referred to certain priority areas, but did not clearly indicate why those priorities had been chosen. UNIFEM should place greater emphasis on mainstreaming gender issues in programmes financed or implemented by multilateral or bilateral donors; cross-sectoral issues, such as the preparations by UNIFEM for UNCED; and the further development of a clearly defined long-term policy. The Fund should also strengthen its role in the field of institutional gender capacity-building and providing support for national planning and decision-making procedures. Lastly, he pointed out that his Government and UNIFEM were jointly organizing an international seminar on violence against women in June, in which women from developing countries would be participating.

45. Mr. MONROE (United States of America) commended the outstanding performance by UNIFEM as a catalyst supporting the efforts of women in developing countries to achieve their economic and social development objectives. The Fund's global initiative on women, environment and development was particularly noteworthy and should serve as a model for initiatives in other areas of global concern to women. UNIFEM should make use of its position within the United Nations system and its strong ties to women's organizations to ensure that gender issues were addressed in international geopolitical debates.

46. Mr. MACHIN (United Kingdom) said that his Government generally preferred not to contribute to voluntary trust funds since earmarking funds for specific activities inhibited the flexibility of the United Nations system. Nevertheless, it considered the issue of women in development so important that it made an exception in the case of UNIFEM. His country's support had been continuous since the inception of the Fund and remained as firm as ever. The

(Mr. Machin, United Kingdom)

principal role of UNIFEM was still advocacy aimed at awareness raising and gender input at the planning level of operational activities throughout the United Nations system. The Fund could carry out similar activities at the national level. While UNIFEM could also play a role in catalytic and pilot-project activities, that should not supersede its advocacy work.

47. His delegation welcomed the proposed merger of UNIFEM with INSTRAW since having two separate United Nations bodies in the same field was unnecessary duplication and a waste of valuable resources. The Fund's financial situation, in view of the current unfavourable climate with regard to contributions, was satisfactory and the greatly reduced figure for unexpended resources was welcome. Lastly, he hoped that the Fund would make a substantial contribution to the Fourth World Conference for Women in 1995.

48. Mr. BORJA DE MOZOTA (France) expressed satisfaction at the work carried out by UNIFEM, which was all the more necessary in view of the major role played by women in development. Although France's voluntary contributions to the Fund were modest, they had steadily increased by 50 per cent over the past two years and would continue to do so. His delegation would appreciate further information on specific actions carried out by the Fund and wished to know if there was a list of ongoing UNIFEM projects. Additional information was also requested on the Fund's relationship with the other organizations concerned, such as UNICEF.

49. Ms. SIRVE (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the catalytic role of UNIFEM was the most important aspect of its mandate. That was clearly demonstrated by the Fund's success in highlighting women's issues within the context of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and its active role in the follow-up activities to Agenda 21. The report on the United Nations Development Fund for Women (DP/1993/41) should have provided more information on how UNIFEM had been successful in the areas of agriculture and trade and industry and on the new priority area of macro policy and planning.

50. Violence against women was a major obstacle to development and a serious violation of women's human rights. The Nordic countries welcomed the Fund's contribution to the dissemination of information on that and other subjects. The preparations for the Fourth World Conference for Women in 1995 were a major challenge for UNIFEM. It was hoped that information on the Fund's specific strategy in that regard would be provided. UNIFEM should also contribute the necessary gender-specific input to the world conferences to be held in the interim since the issue of women was highly relevant with regard to human rights, population and development and social development.

51. The initiative to relocate the Division for the Advancement of Women to New York under the auspices of the Department for Social and Sustainable Development would strengthen coordination in the United Nations system over the entire programme for the advancement of women. UNIFEM and INSTRAW played important roles in that programme. The Nordic countries were looking forward to further discussion of the possibility of merging those two bodies.

52. Mr. BLANK (Germany) said that the integration of women's concerns into the UNCED Agenda 21 was essentially the result of the efforts of UNIFEM and indicated an approach that might be of use for future world conferences based on a desire to improve the living conditions of women and men alike. He noted with satisfaction the Fund's training and employment of displaced persons and female refugees. That was of particular importance since approximately 75 per cent of the world's 15 million refugees were women and children. It was also gratifying to note that over the years there had been a regular increase in contributions and donations to UNIFEM. He hoped that the downward trend foreseeable for 1993 would be of a transitory nature and that the Fund would find new ways to tap additional sources.

53. There was some concern regarding the question of how UNIFEM would increase programme funds with minimal additions on the administrative side, while maintaining the high quality of its work. The delegation of certain financial and programme decisions to the regional programme advisers was certainly appropriate. It was not clear, however, how the Fund planned to expand its global activities within the United Nations family, its presence at the international level and its involvement in preparations for the forthcoming world conferences. Lastly, consideration should be given to the future development of the Fund and of possible new forms of organization.

54. Mr. ANDERSON (Jamaica) said that he fully concurred with the mission defined by UNIFEM, which was to support the efforts of women in both developed and developing countries to achieve their objectives of equality and economic and social development. With its adoption in 1987 of a national policy statement on women, the Government of Jamaica had taken a historic step towards affirming its commitment to the full participation of women in social and economic development. The necessary administrative mechanism to give practical effect to that commitment had since produced tangible results and the Government was continuing its efforts to incorporate concerns of gender into the early stages of project selection and design at both the macro-scale and grass-roots level.

55. While the work of UNIFEM at the country-wide level could be more visible, he expressed appreciation for the assistance given to the Women and Development Unit of the University of the West Indies in strengthening existing regional networks and stimulating work among women's group at all levels in the areas of alternative development strategies and the empowerment of women.

56. Mr. PONCE (Ecuador) said that his Government had long recognized the valuable contribution of women to economic, social and cultural development, particularly in the Andean region. The role of women had assumed even more critical importance as the current economic crisis challenged them to develop more imaginative ways of mobilizing the people and of meeting the needs of their communities. Seen in that light, the current and welcome food aid programme built merely upon certain traditional aspects of Andean culture.

57. His Government shared the views expressed in the report on the subject of violence against women and would welcome more detailed information on the projects being implemented in that area.

58. Ms. CAPELING-ALAKIJA (Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women), replying to the points raised by the delegations, said that she would address the issues of management, programming and public outreach or advocacy.

59. The emphasis of UNIFEM on effective management and rapid delivery of resources was a deliberate strategy to utilize a greater share of the resources allocated to it than previously. Certain problems had been encountered in the area of reporting, owing largely to the fact that each Government wished project data to be presented in a certain way. Since UNIFEM, an agency with a small staff, did not have the resources to reconfigure the data for suiting the particular requirements of each Government, she would shortly propose a formula for standardizing such reporting, which she hoped would be acceptable to Governments.

60. UNIFEM had adopted the programme approach, which permitted it to link its micro-activities and its macro-planning, since experience had shown that a proliferation of projects without a coherent organizing principle yielded poor results. In selecting its micro-activities, therefore, UNIFEM sought to ensure that they were innovative, catalytic, capable of replication and had an impact on policy-making in the recipient country. Micro-activities were also a vehicle for bringing women into the mainstream at all levels. In the effort to change policies that affected the status of women, it was also important to rely on macro-policy interventions to create the necessary enabling environment for women and thereby to increase the number and scope of micro-activities as well as the number of women involved in policy-making. UNIFEM had chosen to focus on agriculture, trade and industry because of the heavy involvement of women in those sectors, particularly in the developing countries, and the importance of those sectors to the national economy. UNIFEM was also cognizant of the importance of eliminating the constraints that forced women into those sectors.

61. The objective of UNIFEM, in terms of its advocacy efforts, was to create space for women and to place on the global agenda issues of concern to them. UNIFEM laid particular interest on sharpening the focus on gender issues. Its efforts in the area of women refugees in Africa, for example, were motivated by situations where more than 80 per cent of the refugees were women and their dependants. In that context, it viewed its own role as that of a catalyst for action on behalf of women, including such issues as violence against women, which was an obstacle to the full participation of women in development.

62. Its advocacy efforts sought to build on the momentum achieved at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and at the World Conference of the International Women's Year, in preparation for the 1995 World Conference on Women. She hoped that the international community would provide the resources to assist UNIFEM in discharging its key role of bringing to the fore at the World Conference those issues that were of concern to women. UNIFEM was working with the private sector and was already benefiting from the assistance of international women's organizations. It was making determined efforts to build a network of national committees and hoped that the target of 20 UNIFEM national committees would be achieved by 1995. She recognized the strains being faced by national development budgets but reminded donor countries that women in the developing countries were under even greater strain.

(Ms. Capeling-Alakija)

63. UNIFEM would shortly make available a strategy document which it had prepared for the World Conference on Women. In that document, it stressed the need to enhance the visibility of women and to ensure that their voices were heard. It also proposed that networks of alliances should be developed between the countries of the North and South and called upon men to assume responsibility for ensuring gender equality.

64. The representative of Switzerland had observed that the effectiveness of UNIFEM was due to its small size and thus greater manageability. She wished to assure the Council, however, that, given the resources to expand, it could perform just as effectively but on a much larger scale.

65. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council agreed that the Drafting Group should begin the elaboration of a draft decision on the subject under consideration.

66. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.